



Lamoine Board of Selectmen

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Minutes – May 9, 2019

Chair Bob Christie called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Present were: Selectmen S. Josephine Cooper, Robert Christie, Gary McFarland, Kathleen Rybarz; Administrative Assistant Stu Marckoon, Transfer Station Manager Chris Meyer.

Bob moved to enter executive session pursuant to 1MRSA §405(6)(a) for the purposes of a job performance review and contract negotiation. Gary 2nd. **Vote in favor was 3-0 (Rybarz not yet present). Out at 6:50 PM**

Regular Meeting

Chairman Bob Christie called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Selectman Nathan Mason arrived at approximately 7:02 PM. Also present in addition the Selectmen and Administrative Assistant above were Assessors Brian Thomas, Jane Fowler and Terry Towne, Fire Captain & Appeals Board Member Michael Jordan, and Fire Chief George “Skip” Smith.

Agenda Review – No changes were made to the printed agenda or addendum.

Minutes – April 25, 2019 – Kathleen moved to approve the minutes as printed. Jo 2nd. **Vote in favor was 4-0.**

Expenditure Warrant 24 – Selectmen signed the warrant in the amount of \$131,255.63. Stu reported he moved \$100,000 in from the investment management account to cover the checks. He said about \$110,000 was for school expenditures.

Cash & Budget Report – Stu reported he had changed the reporting format of the budget, subtracting out the plumbing permit revenue from the expenses, since they offset each other. With that change, the CEO budget will not show as over expended.

Checking Account Reconciliation – Selectmen signed the statement expressing satisfaction with the review of the checking account reconciliation for April 30, 2019 which had been sent by 3-mail a few days ago.

Foreclosed Property – Stu reported that all of the property that automatically foreclosed to the town has been resolved in one form or another. He said the former property owner on Duckling Lane has agreed to the installment agreement and brought those payments up to date. He said there is a piece of land in Bar Harbor Highlands which is currently out to bid with proposals due by May 23, 2019. He said the former Wilk property which has been awarded through a prior bid will close presuming town meeting gives approval next Wednesday, and that a property owner on Buttermilk Road for whom the Selectmen extended the installment payments has diligently kept up his payment efforts.

Request for reimbursement from Birchlawn Drive Property owner – Stu reported the gentleman requesting reimbursement for \$100.00 had contacted a private contractor to remove snow and ice from a ditch on Birchlawn Drive without his knowledge or consent, then called while the contract was there working to inform the town. He said the man had called several times to report his driveway culvert was frozen and the driveway in imminent danger of washing away. Stu said he checked each time the man called and found no imminent danger. He said he did call JR Anderson Pressure Washing to thaw out the culvert after the contract removed the snow and ice, and the weather warmed up a few days later and all the culvert pipes thawed anyway.

Jo moved to not grant the request to reimburse for the non-approved snow removal. Nathan 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0. Selectmen signed a letter explaining why.**

Meeting with Board of Assessors – Board chair Jane Fowler says there is no need for a revaluation at the moment. She said the cost of a full revaluation would likely be \$75,000 to \$100,000. She said another factored revaluation might be possible.

Mrs. Fowler said she doesn't see that the Board of Assessors could bring much information to the Selectmen. She said there will need to be a change in how things are done, and she can't see the board continuing on the way it has especially after the past two elections where no one has actively run for office. She said the Assessors want to figure out what is best for the town. She said that probably will not be an elected board. She said there is little to bring to the town at this time.

Assessor Brian Thomas said the board is collecting information. He said computer assisted mass assessing could be of benefit, and he knows of only one viable option for that which is TRIO, used by many communities across the state. He said it costs \$8,000 to purchase the assessing module and \$1,700/year to maintain. He said the data would have to be installed. There was a discussion about assessing data and property cards and public information. Mr. Thomas said the change to TRIO makes sense from the Assessors' perspective.

Mrs. Fowler said there is a lot of expense to the town if it hires an Assessor's agent. She said she doesn't want to create a financial burden for the town, but she doesn't think an elected board will be viable for much longer. Bob said he'd had an inkling about that.

Nathan asked where the problem might lie to keep on with an elected board. Mrs. Fowler said the Assessors separated from the Board of Selectmen in 1975 or 76. She said that generations have changed, and the Board is aging. Terry Towne said the Assessors' goal is to have some options for a succession plan. He said the Assessors need to sit down with Stu to see what options there might be. He said they have not put anything together yet. He said there is a lot of growth taking place in communities around Lamoine, and the town needs to be ready to handle growth as well.

Bob asked if there were any community models in Hancock County that Lamoine could look at. Mr. Towne said the Town of Hancock operates with an agent. He said the tax maps are currently drawn by hand. He said the town shouldn't have to use an

assessor's agent to do the mapping. He said a GIS overlay would be helpful both to the assessors and to the Code Enforcement Office. He said any decision needs to be an informed decision.

Nathan said there is a concern about electing a board if no one runs. Mr. Thomas said many towns employ a single assessor. He said they got estimates from the firm the town uses now, RJD Appraisal. He said that seems to be among the best models, but it comes with a price tag. Bob asked where else they work. Mrs. Fowler said in Trenton and Hancock. Mr. Towne said also on Swan's Island and Tremont. He said it's a pretty common model, and the assessors are not re-creating the wheel with that. He said there are several options. Bob asked if the Assessors had met with other towns. Mr. Towne said more than half the communities in the area use RJD. He gave some estimates on various services, and said the setup is similar to Code Enforcement.

Mrs. Fowler said the Assessor's Agent would be the town's assessor. She said that would be a better way of running things. Mr. Towne said the town's assessor is an agent for the state, and they have to uphold the rules. Mrs. Fowler said the Assessors are nowhere near a proposal. Jo asked about the timing. Mrs. Fowler said she didn't know. Mr. Towne said the Assessors' first priority is to get the tax commitment done. Mr. Thomas said purchasing software should be a near future priority. There was a brief discussion about the software currently in place.

Nathan said the ball is in the Assessors' court. Bob said he appreciates the Assessors saying that there are options. Kathleen said it would be great to have some sort of proposal by October or November when the budget is in development.

Meeting with Fire Chief – Chief George “Skip” Smith reported to the Selectmen that there is a problem with the ladder truck. He said a major hydraulic valve has failed and it's very expensive to repair. He said he got a commitment from Smeal to sell one. Kathleen asked if it's a replacement part. Chief Smith said it was, and explained what it does. He said the department was operating the truck and heard air leaking and stopped before catastrophic damage was done to the ladder. He said the noise got worse and a professional looked at it. He said the department drove the truck to Island Falls and found the swivel valve was worn out.

Nathan asked what the bottom line was. Chief Smith said about \$15,000 for the part. There was a brief discussion about the valve and hydraulics in general. Chief Smith said he plans to talk with the people who sold the truck to the fire department to see if any warranty would help. He said the ladder worked well when the truck was purchased, but there has been a history with Smeal and similar products failing. He said he believed the new valve would be guaranteed for 10-to-15 years. He said with the installation, the project would cost about \$25,000. He said the turntable and the ladder are OK.

Nathan asked where the town could find the money. Stu said the undesignated fund balance is healthy, and that's one reason “surplus” exists is for surprise expenses. A discussion followed regarding holding a town meeting to deal with the matter.

Jo asked if there has been an opportunity to use the new truck. Chief Smith said it ran on the Oak Street fire in Ellsworth in March, but it was not pressed into service. He said the department has trained on the truck. Nathan moved to authorize the acquisition of the swivel valve. Gary 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0 (Discussion followed regarding timing of a special town meeting).**

Lamoine 150! – Jo said the Lamoine 150! Group forgot to invite the fire department to the meeting earlier in the day. She said the kickoff to the celebration will be on October 5, 2019 with a road race and barbecue. Chief Smith said the fire department is trying to figure out how many people to feed. A brief discussion followed.

Special Town Meeting – June 11, 2019 – Selectmen reviewed the referendum questions that will appear on the ballot and on the warrant. There was a brief discussion regarding the MDOT / Municipal Partnership Initiative program.

Jo moved to sign the warrant as drafted. Gary 2nd. **Vote in favor was 4-1 (Mason opposed).**

The specimen ballot drafted for the town meeting was reviewed – no changes were proposed.

Public Hearing – Selectmen reviewed the public hearing order for May 23, 2019. Gary moved to approve the order. Kathleen 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

Road Projects –Stu said he'd not had a chance to work up road projects, noting that his truck was totaled in an accident on Sunday. He said he would have something for the next agenda.

Parks Commission – Vendor Rules – Stu reported the Parks Commission chair was unable to attend this meeting and would like to be on the next agenda to talk about rules for vendors.

Returnables – Jo moved to award the next available months to the requestors from the Lamoine School in the order listed on the agenda. Gary 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

Raise the Floor Effort – Stu reported the measure was defeated in a Legislative Committee.

Cable TV Proposal – Stu reported a proposal came from Brian Lippold, formerly of the Sewall Company at the request of the Technology Committee. Nathan moved to refer the proposal to the Technology Committee. Kathleen 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

LD-609 – Kathleen said the bill proposes to return 1% from short term rentals back to towns. Nathan asked what the purpose was for that. Kathleen said to make improvements in reference to the lodging being provided. She said Lamoine is located in the 4th to 5th highest tourism area. Nathan asked if tourism was impacting something

in town. Kathleen said perhaps revenue could be used to make the town more walkable. Jo asked if it was an opportunity for funding. Kathleen said it was.

Michael Jordan asked who would be doing the taxing. Kathleen said 1% would be tacked onto the rental tax and collected by the state and returned to the community. Nathan said he's never been in favor of taxing just to generate revenues. Bob said he was trying to understand the concept. Jo said she's having a hard time justifying the reason for a higher tax. Kathleen said it would be a revenue source for the future. She said there are 60-locations in town that bring in \$20,000 a day in rental income. Bob noted that he just used Air B&B to book a room in New Hampshire, and it was nice. After a brief debate, no action was taken.

Transfer Station Entrance - Stu reported Richard McMullen had estimated the cost to be \$1,779.55. Jo moved to authorize repair. Nathan 2nd. **Vote in favor was 5-0.**

Mowing – Mr. McMullen informed the town there would be no change in the mowing rates. There was no objection to continuing to use McMullen Landscape for mowing.

Other – Bob said he would not be in town for the June 20th Selectmen's meeting and asked if Nathan would chair it.

Jo said the LD 150! Group met today and the logo contest has closed with quite a few entries. She said they will be judged on May 23rd with a winner to be revealed on June 15, 2019 at Noon at the town hall. She said October 5 is the kick-off date for the celebration, and a logo will start things happening. She said the group plans to send postcards town wide every three months. She said there will be a lot of events and it will be fun.

Michael Jordan asked if there has been any discussion about a change in the returnables policy. Selectmen said there had been and there was no change proposed.

Nathan noted the softball team is 3-0 this season, an improvement over last year when they won just one game.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stu Marckoon, Adm. Asst. to the Selectmen.